

According to Custom

By A. M. DAVIES OGDEN

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The night was perfect. Over picturesque Havana a yellow moon poured a flood of glory, throwing strange shadows on the old Morro, where the O'Donnell tower light revolved with steady flashes, and sleeping all the world in a subtle, elusive spell.

On the Malecon, the band was playing. Light hearted laughter floated from the thickly clustered benches and carriages. It was not a night to be alone.

Jerry Benedict, standing on the edge of it all, felt the beauty and knew the loneliness. He had come to Havana at Tom's suggestion. "There is a good opening down here which might suit you," his brother had written. And now, on arriving, he found Tom gone to Cienfuegos, not to return for several days. Jerry, wandering about by himself, had promptly fallen in love with the quaint little city, its gayly painted houses, dusky white clad men and pretty señoritas. Havana was not a bad place, he decided. But tonight he was restless. The moon was almost too powerful in its splendor and charm.

Turning away from the merry crowd that made him feel an alien and an outcast, he decided to walk to his brother's house in Vedado. There was a fresh coolness in the air. A walk would do him good. He struck accordingly into one of the nearby streets.

On his side the pavement was quite dark, but across the way the moon, reflecting with dazzling brilliancy upon the pink and white houses, showed every detail of window and facade and revealed plainly any one within who leaned out to breathe the air.

Suddenly Benedict stopped short. In an upper window, alone, stood a girl, certainly the most exquisite girl Benedict ever had seen. Against the blackness of the room behind, her face, turned full toward the street, stood out as purely pale as a moon flower. Heavy masses of dark hair crowned the statelike little head, and just back of the tiny ear lay one splendid crimson blossom. Benedict caught his breath. The girl could not see him there in the darkness, he thought, and he remained motionless, staring with eager eyes. Who could she be?

The sound of a footfall roused him and he turned abruptly just at the moment to collide with a slender, carefully dressed man. Benedict, his eyes still full of moonlight, mumbled some word of apology, but the other, after a quick glance at the window, looked back at the young American, and a slow smile began to dawn on his lips.

"But you are quite excusable, señor," he said in pretty English. Again his eyes sought the window. "It is for me to apologize," he laughed. "The sight of the Señorita Carmela is reason enough."

"You know her then?" burst out Benedict. Then he started and recollected. "I beg your pardon," he stammered distressfully. "But—but—"

The man nodded more gravely. "I judge you are a stranger here," he remarked. Young Benedict flushed.

"Yes," he said. "I suppose it is awfully rude to stand in the street and stare that way. But I never had seen any one so beautiful before," he ended up quite simply, the color deepening under his tan. "And I thought perhaps my brother might know," flourished again. "Mr. Thomas Benedict," he added as the other seemed to wait.

The Cuban looked at him more closely.

"Is Tom Benedict your brother?" he asked, and in some way his voice had altered. "Tom! Ah!" Then he lifted his hat.

"Good night," he said politely. "And let me give you a piece of advice. It is not unusual to stand under a window, to watch from a point of vantage, or even to speak." And again he laughed. "But you, señor—and his tone held a warning tone—for you, señor, it would be best not to try it. You are but a stranger here, and our customs are not yours."

And before the somewhat indignant Benedict could recover speech the stranger had bowed, replaced his cigarette between his lips, and was gone.

The girl at the window, too, had vanished, and Benedict, accepting the other's advice, walked on. But the sight here and there in the dusky street of a man leaning against the iron bars which guard the lower windows, exchanging low remarks to some inmate, evoked strange longings.

In the morning, however, Jerry could laugh at the whole episode. A girl's face at a window—surely he had seen plenty such. And if not quite so wonderful as this one—well, the Cuban's remarks had been well meant and were worth remembering. So he idled away an hour or two in the Osa Obesa, with its gay shop windows and bright awnings stretched the width of the narrow little street. Then he went to the bank for letters and had luncheon at the Engletons, where he looked in vain for a familiar face. He did not mean to go near that street, her street, again, he assured himself. And yet somehow as 5 o'clock drew near he found his feet taking him in that direction. He scolded himself, turned and began to walk away. But it seemed foolish to avoid a street just because a pretty girl lived there, and it was the shortest way home. He was sure that it was the shortest way home. The next moment he was pacing rapidly along it.

As he drew near the house where he

had seen her, however, his step began to falter. Would she—could she be there? He looked, hardly daring to hope. All at once his heart thumped madly. She was there, and she was looking straight at him. He could have sworn that she recognized him. Yet how was that possible? And then slightly, almost imperceptibly, but to Benedict quite unmistakably, bent her head.

She was still away. There was nothing to do. Jerry fell into the way of passing through that street once or twice a day. The girl was usually in her window. He would bow gravely. She would respond with the faintest smile. And one never to be forgotten afternoon there fell at his feet a small scarlet flower.

The night Tom came home he watched his brother throughout dinner with puzzled, thoughtful eyes. He did not know much about the "kid," he reflected, nor how he took things.

"I saw Don Enrique Gallegos today," he began abruptly. Then, as Jerry seemed unenlightened, he added, "He said that he had met you one night outside the Martinez." Jerry nodded.

"It, that chap! Yes; he did give me some talk about moving on, I believe."

"Which you apparently did not heed," commented Tom dryly. "And now it seems you have been compromised with the girl and—"

"Compromising!" broke in Jerry, widely astonished. "Why, I've never even met her. Wouldn't I like to, though?"

"If you really wish it I suspect I can arrange it," said Tom slowly. "Donna Carmela is undeniably lovely. But do you realize what meeting her means?"

"Why, that, I met her, I suppose," retorted Jerry. But Tom shook his head.

"It means more than that," he said quickly. "The Martines are old fashioned people. Their ideas are very strict. You may court through the window if you like, but once taken to the house an engagement is settled."

"Engagement!" gasped Jerry. "Engagement to a girl you never have even spoken to?"

"That is the custom," said Tom. "And it is that or leave Havana. In fact, if Don Enrique had not known that you were my brother you might have got yourself into serious trouble."

Luckily we are great friends, but even as it is—don't choose hastily, dear boy," he added kindly. "Of course it may have been the merest flirtation on your part, and you couldn't be expected to understand."

"And the girl?" cried Jerry. "She thinks—"

"She naturally knows nothing of American ways," answered Tom gravely.

For a moment Jerry sat with whirling brain. Become engaged to a perfect stranger? That he was longing to meet her he knew; that he would probably be only too glad of the chance to marry her he thought most likely. Yet to plunge into it this way! And then he thought of the rose which had fallen at his feet and straightened himself.

"I should like to meet the Señorita Carmela," he said. "How soon may we go?"

The Wild Goose Bean.

To the lumbermen of Maine are due the discovery and production of the now famous goose bean. The real name of the man who planted the first crop of this vegetable is not known, but there are two rivals for the honor, and each has a most plausible version of his discovery of the bean. John Goddard, afterward colonel in the civil war, told this story of how the bean was first found and grown by him: He had charge of a gang of lumbermen during the spring of 1846. The soft, stumpy snow made the roads impassable for a "tote team," and the men had been without fresh meat for more than a week. Colonel Goddard gave the cook orders to take his gun and go out to see if he could get a shot at the wild geese which were flying north in great flocks. The cook was lucky enough to bring back several birds for supper. When he was dressing them he noticed from the lack of food in their crops that they had been on short rations during their journey northward. In the crop of one young garden were three beans, which Goddard saved and planted in his garden that summer. From these three beans he harvested about two quarts of beans, and from that first crop came the supply which has since gladdened the hearts of lumbermen throughout the country.

Lighting the Yule Log.

A custom at one time prevalent in England and still observed in some of the northern districts of the old country is that of placing an immense log of wood, sometimes the root of a great tree in the wide chimney place. This log is often called the Yule log, and it was on Christmas eve that it was put on the wide hearth. Around it would gather the entire family, and their entrance was the occasion of a great deal of ceremony. There was music and rejoicing, while the one authorized to light it was obliged to have clean hands. It was always lighted with a brand left over from the log of the previous year, which had been carefully preserved for that purpose. A poem sings of it in this way:

With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his spending
On your panting play.
That sweet luck may—

Come white the log is a-tending.

The Yule log was supposed to be a protection against evil spirits, and it was considered a bad omen if the fire went out before the evening was over.

The family and guests used to seat themselves in front of the brightly burning fire, and many a story and merry jest went round the happy group.

As he drew near the house where he

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ORIGIN OF BAGPIPES

IT IS FOUND IN THE ANCIENT REED,
OR SHEPHERD'S PIPE.

In Early Times There Were Many
Different Kinds of Bagpipes in Use
in Europe—The Highland, Lowland
and Irish Varieties.

According to the encyclopedia, the bagpipe is a wind instrument the fixed characteristic of which has always been two or more reed pipes attached to and sounded by a wind chest, or bag, which bag has in turn been supplied either by the lungs of the performer or by a bellows. The original instrument was presumably the simple reed, or shepherd's pipe, which was well known to the Trojans, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. But the strain of blowing these ancient pipes was so great that some genius conceived the idea of having a reserve supply of wind in a bag attached to the pipes, and hence the bagpipe. The first real instrument is believed to have been a skin of a goat or kid, with two pipes, through one of which the bag was inflated, the other emitting the sound.

In early times the bagpipe was common in Great Britain and abroad. At one time there were five different kinds known on the continent, some inflated by the mouth and others by bellows, while in the British Isles three kinds were known—the great highland bagpipe, the lowland bagpipe of Scotland (which closely resembled the Northumbrian) and the Irish bagpipe.

In the great highland bagpipe, which originally had but one drone, a valve tube leads from the mouth to an air tight bag, which has four other orifices, three large enough to contain the base of three fixed long tubes, termed drones, and another smaller, to which is fitted the chanter. The three are thrown on the shoulder, while the latter is held in the hands. All four pipes are filled with reeds, but of different kinds. The drones are tuned by means of sliders, or movable joints, and this tuning or preparation for playing, which generally occupies a few minutes of the piper's time before he begins the tune proper, is heard with impatience by those not accustomed to the instrument. Indeed, it gave rise to the saying, applied in Scotland to those who waste time over small matters, "You are longer in tuning your pipes than in playing your tune."

The Scottish lowland bagpipe, like the Northumbrian pipe, was in two forms, one consisting of a smaller and milder toned version of the highland instrument and the other a miniature of this and having the same relation to it as the fife has to a German band. Its greatest drawback, from the point of view of the devotees of the highland bagpipe, is that it is unsuited to perform what they consider the perfection of pipe music—the piobroch. These small pipes were, however, gentler than the highland, having the same tone, but less sonorous. It was to the strains of such a pipe that Chaucer tells us the company of pilgrims left London, and it is the same instrument that is alluded to in Shakespeare as the Lincolnshire bagpipe.

The Irish bagpipe is the instrument in its most elaborate form and is supplied with wind by a bellows. The drones are all fixed on one stock and have keys which are played by the wrist of the right hand. The reeds are soft and the tones very sweet and melodious, and there is a harmonious bass which is very effective in the hands of a good player. The Irish instrument is fast dying out.

The bagpipe, though at one time fairly common, never obtained a firm hold in England. It lost favor and gradually deteriorated until it is now practically extinct. The average Englishman neither appreciates nor understands it. A famous poet irreverently once compared its notes to "the shrill screech of a lame goose caught in corn," while another heretic writer likens its sound to a "horrible noisy, mad Irishman" or to the "eternally tormented." To the Irish people it appeals more strongly. They still possess in a degree the feeling of attachment to the bagpipe which is so general among Scotsmen. But it is undoubtedly more closely associated with Scotland, both in the highlands and lowlands, than with any other country, the particular instrument in use being the great highland bagpipe, which as already explained, consists of three drones, including the big drone, which was added about the beginning of the last century. It is this type which has gradually superseded the lowland pipe. There is no doubt that the bagpipe was in use in Scotland from a very early period, and it is in Scotland that it has been brought to the highest degree of perfection. Its music distinctly connects it with Scotland, as is clear in the piobroch, the strathspey, the reel, the march and other popular melodies. There are proofs that the instrument was cultivated in Scotland certainly in the twelfth century and of its universal popularity as early as the fifteenth century, while in the seventeenth century nearly every town in the highlands and lowlands boasted of its piper.—London Globe.

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